Laidlaw and Son, of Glasgow and Edinburgh, for the manner in which they have executed the gas-fittings, a branch requiring, in a theatre, more skill and ingenuity than is brought into requisition in any other description of building. Two 1½ inch pipes extend round the edge of the stage, with Argand burners, chimneys, and shades to each: the burners in each pipe are 6 inches apart, but those in one row placed alternately, in relation to those in the other: the lights on the outer pipe have green glass chimneys, for moonlight scenes; those on the inner one, colourless chimneys for ordinary use: for melo-dramatic effects, wherein the pyrotechnists' art is commonly brought into play, I suppose red chimneys would, according to this mode, suffice. The 'gas-battens,' which light up the wings and borders, are a quarter-circle in their section, about a foot in width, and their lengths suited to the height and width of the stage openings; they are lined with galvanized sheet-iron, and hooped across in the open part, to prevent any combustible material which might flap against them coming in contact with the jets of gas, the pipe being placed in the hollow of the quarter-circle. At the prompter's place, where the arrangements are made for the raising and lowering of the lights in the stage and audience departments, the risk of the gas being turned off altogether, is obviated by having, at the stop-cock on each large pipe, small parallel pipes extending, so as to connect the large one in its two portions on either side, the small pipe being also provided with a stop-cock, should occasion require it. While the curtain is down, the house is kept brilliantly lit up; but during performance, the light is reduced, in order to enhance the effect of the *tableau*.

Seeing.—As regards the form of the house, it was greatly regulated in its proportions by those of the original structure: and these happily favoured the wide rather than the long form, which has the disadvantage, that the audience have a difficulty in seeing past each other, and are placed in an uncomfortable, constrained attitude, looking, as it were, *askance* at the stage. In taking up the subject, and considering the pitch of the different tiers, increasing, as they do, in steepness, as seen, say in the longitudinal section, it becomes obvious that the longer the central space is as compared with its width, the more must the pitch of any one tier increase in steepness in the direction from the centre round on either side towards the proscenium; for then the audience are looking more and more, as it were, into a well. This increase is usually, and most conveniently obtained by keeping the passages at the back about level, and lowering the inner beams as they approach the stage-end: by this means, the advantage is gained to the audience of seeing comfortably over each other, when looking towards the stage, as well as when looking at the lower tiers opposite them. The view from the back rows, to be perfect, ought of course to embrace the whole proscenium; this, however, it appears, involves a degree of comfort which it is not customary to attempt obtaining; the consideration being rather how little of the height of the proscenium will suffice, so as to reduce the entire height or get in the greatest number of tiers of which it is capable.

Hearing.—The material of the ceiling is canvas, dense in quality, and rendered more so by the operations of the artist. Writers on acoustics affirm that sonorous vibrations will be propagated in a speaking-trumpet lined with cloth, with equal effect as if it were formed of a metallic substance; and we have Dr. Arnott's interesting relation of the ringing of the bells in the city of St. Salvador, on the Brazilian coast, having been distinctly heard on board-ship 100 miles at sea, the sound being wafted by a gentle wind over smooth water, and interrupted in its progress, and concentrated to a focus, by the concave sail of the vessel; thus much for canvas: a dense body of vapour, even, it is allowed, may cause the reverberation of sound; and hence we have reasons to justify the use of so pliant a substance as canvas for a surface to reflect sound where a wooden sounding-board is not conveniently available. But woollen cloth, I have reason to believe, is a great absorbent of sound: at this theatre I have had an opportunity of comparing the singing in the rehearsals with the same in the public performance; when I was struck with the loss that was occasioned evidently by the presence of the audience, and which I mainly attribute to the amount of broad cloth present, though partially to the interruption caused to the rays of sound in passing towards the various reverberating surfaces; at the same time, not to forget the reverberable power of vapour, some slight share of said loss might possibly be chargeable to the diminished purity of the atmosphere (not to confess, for all that, that our ventilator was inefficient). We know that the more carbonic-acid gas is generated in an assembly the more dense the atmosphere becomes, the density of that gas being half as much again as pure air; the thick imperfect tones of the speaker in a church or hall crowded to suffocation, compared to the ringing sonorousness of his voice when he happens not to be quite so attractive, are very perceptible, and may be referred to the causes I have mentioned.

Means of communication all round the house have been preserved in the various tiers, as well as ample means of egress. In such places the latter is of much importance, as well as that the doors that are kept shut during performance should open outwards; it is also desirable to have the entrances to the various parts nearest those *places* which are least advisable: for experience proves that if they are at the best places, these will get first filled, and thus form a barrier to reaching the others.

Besides the precautions taken with the gas-battens against fire, arrangements are in progress for laying on a supply of water, at high pressure, in a standing-main behind pit, boxes, and gallery, with a short hose and nozzle to each; also a cistern on each wing-platform, with hose descending for the supply of a portable fire-engine on the stage: the partition which separates the audience and stage departments on either side of the proscenium-opening is also of brick; and the small circular staircases which communicate with all the private-boxes and with the wing-platforms are of the same material.

In Glasgow, buildings are not regulated by any Buildings Act, but there is a board, called the Dean-of-Guild Court, before which parties intending to build are required to appear, in order to their plans having its sanction, after affording to the owners of properties abutting upon the one in question, an opportunity for bringing forward objections. It takes cognizance, also, on the part of the liege, of all cases, in respect to buildings, wherein danger may threaten, or accident have occurred. This court, for the satisfaction of the public, the gentleman for whom the theatre has been fitted up, memorialised, at my recommendation, for an inspection to be made by efficient persons as to the security of the structure. A readiness, in this manner, to consult the feelings and allay the fears of the uninitiated portion of the public, should ever be evinced; and I am disposed to think that, in many cases, public buildings ought not to be opened for use without the concurrent testimony of experienced professional men being first obtained: in the present case, sundry things were required, and being reasonable, were of course readily conceded.

The decorations are in *carton-pierre*, and were furnished by Messrs. Jackson, of Rathbone-place:* they are in high relief, and comprise festoons of fruit and flowers, medallions, and panels, containing groups of children; a mimic orchestra of these are perched in the box-front, on brackets in the line of the pillars; while over them, in the gallery-front, are termini, with brackets bearing crystal gas-lustres. The enrichments are white, picked out in gold, with pale blue back-grounds in panels, and the fronts of the tiers rose-colour.

The scenes are chiefly what, in theatrical phraseology, are termed flats; the act-drop is, however, an exception, and it is due to the able young artist, Mr. Bough, who painted it, to state, that it is a work which foretokens distinction to him as a painter.

The whole arrangements evince the good taste of the manager, Mr. Edmund Glover, son of Mrs. Glover, of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket; and the style in which the house-furnishings, the stage properties and dresses, and all other appointments have been prepared, show that he has spared neither pains nor expense. The performances are opera, vaudeville, and ballet,—the operatic corps being led by the able *bâton* of Mr. Howard Glover. The theatre was opened (notwithstanding the ill-instigated statement of a London contemporary, that it could not be), on Monday, January 15th, with the opera of "Giselle, or the Night Dancers," and the vaudeville of the "Imperial Guard."

The theatre is calculated, when it is "a full house," to accommodate 1,400 persons comfortably.

James Wylson.

* We had the pleasure of recommending these manufacturers to Mr. Glover, for this work; induced to do so by the able manner in which they had carried out Mr. Bradwell's views at the Lyceum Theatre, Strand.—Ed.

EXHIBITION OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTION, PALL-MALL.

The earliest of the annual displays of modern art was opened to the public on Monday last, in the rooms of this association, and it may be pronounced as a very tolerable, if not absolutely a good collection. About 400 pictures are annually offered on its walls for sale, chiefly painted by artists to whom the disposal of their performances is of vast object. They are offered at a season when there is no competition of the greater gatherings, and the society being composed of the highest and most intellectual amateurs of modern art—individually its greatest patrons—at once brings the rising artist into prominent contact with their very best friends, on the most solid basis to promote future success. These are surely sufficient grounds for the public to recognise with approbation the labours of the association called the British Institution for the promotion of the fine arts of the country, and cause regret when its affairs are not well administered. An accusation has been founded on a demand to enlarge the premises where the exhibition is held, and no doubt such an addition is very desirable. Reference thereon has been made to the fortunes of the governors and directors, and some inuendoes of apathy on this point have occasionally been promulgated. This is scarcely just, for the directors have made many efforts to obtain property in the rear for the purpose; and, although the property sought for was not of vast value, yet the impurity or vice of its application rendered it lucrative to the possessors,—consequently they have been met by the most outrageous and extravagant demands, such as could be viewed only as a gross attempt at extortion.

We are not going to enter into a discussion of the usual range of critical remarks, nor dwell with feminine rapture on works being replete with sweetness, or delicious colour, or delightful bits, or charming softness: for art-criticism demands other phrases, and certain fundamental acquirements upon which the capacity of judging can alone, with safety, be formed. It is not founded on vague perception, arises from no concatenation of ideas, is not taught by school learning. The sublime and beautiful in all objects of ocular investigation, influence the intelligent observer and the unlearned spectator, upon notions diametrically opposite. To arrive at a pure knowledge of a work of art, requires an acquaintance with its inflexible principles of invention, the artistic construction, the difficulties of execution to be surmounted, and the degree of success with which any production has been completed. The scholar may arrive at a just understanding of the ideal and the inventive portion: although the fine arts form no branch of university education. But let him once wander into the technical, and then we hear similar absurdities promulgated, as when a late writer on Spanish art, talks of *transparent* greys and ultra-marine with warm white glazings. And also Dr. Waagen, of Berlin, whose name is almost authoritative, does not scruple to praise the French school as a school of colour, thus running from the stony pallid hues of German art, to the opposite excess of tinsel gaudy glare. There are besides many who pretend to be connoisseurs, and employ their pen on the subject, whose sole attainment arises from a comparison of what they have seen: omitting all reference to other existing examples, and not even taking the pains to be

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